

POLICY Area CULTURE!



The roundtable “Cultural relations in turbulent times” took place in Lappeenranta and online on 27 September with around 25 participants from 10 different countries. The event was organised by Policy Area Culture within the 13th EUSBSR Annual Forum.

There were two keynote speakers: Nicholas Cull, professor of communication in the field of public diplomacy at the USC and advisor to governments and international bodies across continents, spoke of Reputational Security. This phenomenon, Cull argues, is of high importance for the ability of e.g. states to engender motivation and raise support for their policies and actions. Cull mentioned the difference between international attention to the invasions in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 as an example of how Ukraine and its partners have been handling the reputation and knowledge of the country’s culture and identity. The Baltic countries were also mentioned as countries that to some extent have succeeded in working with their reputational status - whereas one might question to which extent this can be said for the region as a whole.

Solomiya Borshosh, executive director of the Ukrainian Institute, gave a presentation on the work that the institute has been doing since its creation in 2015, precisely after the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea. Handling knowledge about the culture and art of Ukraine is an important part of the institute’s strategy, and Borshosh mentioned the work of Cull as an inspiration. Since 24 February 2022, an increasing focus of Borshosh’s work has been on securing the well-being and capability of Ukrainian artists in carrying out their work. However, the role of culture and the arts remains an important focus area for securing the awareness and support of the international community. Following the presentations, there was a discussion with the audience, focusing e.g. on how reputational handling and slogan-based branding differ and how reputational security is a multilateral and complex undertaking.

The event was moderated and reported by Oleg Koefoed from Growing Pathways.

